

BATTLE STRATEGIES

FOR THE BELIEVER



Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle—
Psalms 144:1

Chapter after chapter in the Old Testament we read about how the Israelites had to fight a number of battles, sometimes against nations much larger and with greater military might than Israel had. Yet in spite of the odds stacked against them, Israel prevailed most of the time.

In the New Testament, the battles continued, but those documented were more of the warfare going on in the spiritual realm with the Bible teaching us about fighting, wrestling with the unseen, contending, prevailing and overcoming. All these speak to various forms of battle that we have to engage in through our journey of life.

It can be overwhelming to look at all one has to contend with if we focus on our strength alone. But God never leaves us without superior battle strategies to work with. This series we are exploring a few of the strategies made available to believers so we can come out as victors at all times.

Day 1

Turn it Over to God

'And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.' Judges 4:3

'Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?'" Judges 4:6-7

One of the battles Israel had to fight was during the time of Deborah's leadership as Judge as she sent for Barak to give him instructions to go to battle with the ruling government of the day. A very risky thing to do, the Israelites were essentially going against an army that had much more sophisticated weaponry than they did and the odds seemed to be against them. Two critical things turned the battle in their favour before they even started. First is that they cried out to the Lord, second is that they followed the instructions he gave them. This essentially put God in charge of the battle and guaranteed their victory as the Lord Himself took responsibility for providing the strategy for success.

'And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" Judges 4:8

'Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.' Psalm 147:5

Victory seemed so unlikely that a seasoned soldier such as Barak basically said since Deborah was the one that received the instruction, she would have to go into battle with them, otherwise they wouldn't proceed. However, it wasn't about Deborah, it was about the One who instructed her.

What battles are you fighting today – in your home, office, school, business? Are you trying to figure it all out by yourself? You have a unique advantage as a child of God to bring Him into the matter by laying the issue at His feet and asking for His direction. Please note that it's not enough just to ask, you also have to be ready to wait for His response and be willing to do what He says. God has more ways to fix a problem than you could ever imagine. Don't limit yourself to functioning in your wisdom alone. The Holy Spirit knows all things, ask Him to give you the strategy to respond accurately to the situation you're facing.

Prayer: Lord help me as I turn this battle over to You.

Day 2

The Power of Praise

'It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.' 2 Chronicles 20:1

Has it ever happened to you that you seem to be minding your own business but all of a sudden, some people just decide to pick a fight with you for no apparent reason? Jehoshaphat was in such a situation when he was notified that a great multitude from 3 large nations and their supporters had decided to come against Judah and were already nearby.

'...Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord ..."' 2 Chronicles 20:15,17

Understandably Jehoshaphat was afraid (v3) and sought the Lord through fasting and prayer as the One who could make a way for Judah out of the situation. His approach teaches us something critical – when we seek the Lord, we should expect to hear from Him. Spiritual activities are not an end in themselves, rather they create channels to enable us engage the supernatural so we can live victoriously.

'Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.' 2 Chronicles 20:22

As they prayed and fasted the winning strategy was revealed to them: praise! It is doubtful any military officer would choose praise as a weapon, but we see that as they praised, the angelic army went into operation and Judah's enemies wiped themselves out. Not only did Judah not need to fight, they spent 3 full days collecting the spoils. Who else but God can do this?

'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!' Psalms 150:6

In our lives today we are not likely to be engaged in physical battles, but praise remains a powerful strategy to win in the wars of life. Praise positions us to enable God move on our behalf. Praise is both defensive and pre-emptive: we don't need to wait for things to happen (good or bad) before we praise, it should form part of our lives.

Prayer: Holy Spirit please teach me how to live a lifestyle of continuous praise.

Day 3

Power in Obedience

“...the Lord said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand...You shall march around the city... and the priests shall blow the trumpets... that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat...” Joshua 6:2-5

One of the greatest battles recorded under Joshua’s leadership was the battle of Jericho. A heavily fortified city, it looked impossible for Israel to penetrate such a city. But the Lord gave Joshua a specific strategy for victory. There’s no apparent physical correlation between the marching, the priests blowing the horns or the shouting and the walls of Jericho falling seemingly by themselves. It wasn’t about the marching or the horns, what won the battle for Israel was obedience.

Before Israel got to Jericho, the Lord had given Joshua various instructions for crossing the Jordan and being circumcised which he obeyed. It was after these that He gave Joshua the strategy for Jericho. Many times it’s hard for us to obey “big” instructions if we haven’t gotten used to obeying the “little” ones first. If we fail in little obediences we will likely fail in the large ones because we’ve not yet developed a character of obedience.

“But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord... So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated...” Joshua 7:1,4

Right on the back of the great victory at Jericho, Israel went to battle against Ai. It was a much smaller city so they didn’t bother sending many men- victory was seemingly assured. However, Israel was soundly defeated. Why? Failure to follow instructions regarding items found at Jericho. What seemed like a small disobedience by one man cost the lives of others. Is it possible that there are earlier instructions we’ve disobeyed? Before asking the Lord for a new strategy one of the things we should ask is that He reveal to us where we’ve been disobedient so we can repent and make the necessary corrections.

Prayer: Lord show me where I haven’t obeyed Your instructions so I can make the right adjustments. Help me to live a life of obedience to You because that’s where my victory is.

Day 4 The Lord's Counsel

'... the inhabitants of Gibeon ...worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors... And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us...but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.' Joshua 9:3-4,6,14

It's not every battle that has to be fought; some could be avoided by discerning what the situation really calls for. The Gibeonites were afraid of Israel and decided to con them into entering a covenant. What this meant was that Israel was obligated to fight on Gibeon's behalf whenever the situation called for it. By the time the deception was detected, it was already too late.

'Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.' Joshua 10:5

Because of the covenant, Israel was obligated to fight on Gibeon's behalf and because God was with them, they won the battle. But had Joshua and the leaders enquired of the Lord, they would have discerned who the Gibeonites really were and may not have aligned with them in covenant. Israel's resources were extended in fighting a war that need not have happened.

'You will guide me with Your counsel...' Psalms 73:24

'For this is God, Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide Even to death.' Psalms 48:14

'I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.' Psalms 32:8

Could it be that there are some battles we are fighting simply because we didn't seek the Lord's counsel? Are there jobs, businesses, neighbourhoods, relationships we have entered based on face value and later realised that it was an error to do so? Upon reflection we see that we need not have gone into those things to begin with. The Lord in His mercy may grant us victory, but we would have spent time and effort in what need not have happened. Sometimes the strategy comes from knowing what to avoid and not getting into a particular battle in the first place.

Prayer: Lord help me as I commit to seeking Your counsel in everything.

Day 5 Spirit First

“They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.” Judges 5:20

When Deborah and Barak went into battle, Deborah understood that success in the battle wasn't going to come from anything that can be seen. She faced the battle at its true source: in the spirit. That's why she could arise and move, confident in the knowledge that God had already given Israel the victory. It's critical we understand that the origin of most battles we're engaged in has less to do with us and more to do with a much larger agenda. The reason we even engage in warfare is because of something that happened long before any of us currently living was born.

“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:9

When the devil was cast to the earth, he and his company of demons began seeking to systematically wreak havoc in people's lives using various methods. While believers are not left out of this evil agenda, the difference is we already have victory through the price Jesus paid for us.

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” I John 4:4

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,” II Corinthians 10:4

Before anything happens in the physical, it will already have occurred in the spirit first. Therefore, we should not engage in 'battle' as though we are limited to engaging with our five senses. The Bible makes it clear to us that there's an enemy constantly waging war against us, but we're not to be afraid because we're on the winning side. So, before attempting to respond to any challenges, we must address the issue in the spirit FIRST.

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.” Isaiah 54:17

We shouldn't be unaware of the devices of the enemy and the fact that weapons will be formed. However, when we engage by the Holy Spirit we will receive insight and spiritual intelligence on how to address the battle successfully.

Prayer: Lord teach me how to address the spiritual aspect first in all things.

Day 6 Courage for the Next Step

'Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.'" Judges 6:14-15

The Midianites had attacked Israel so viciously and frequently over 7 years that many people like Gideon started hiding what little they had so it wouldn't be ravaged by the next attack. Israel effectively went into hiding and lived in fear as the miracles of the battles the Lord won for them were a distant memory. It was at this time that Gideon had an angelic visitation instructing him to go against the Midianites and understandably Gideon was afraid.

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' II Timothy 1:7

Fear is a spirit and that can be overcome. Many times, God may call us to do something which causes fear to rise within us when we look at either what we are called to do/become or what we are coming up against. But the Bible tells us that we haven't received the spirit of fear, which means we do not have to accept fear. That doesn't mean fear will always automatically disappear. Rather it means we do what needs to be done despite the fear we feel.

'The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.' Proverbs 28:1

Fear is a potent weapon in the hands of the enemy because of its capacity to paralyse us into inactivity and we don't take action we automatically lose the battle. When we let fear in, we allow the situation to overshadow who God is and what He has said to us. We remind ourselves of our inadequacies and basically agree with the enemy that he's already won. But when we allow the Holy Spirit to shift our perspective, we gain strength for the next step and the next and so on until we have conquered what was making us fearful.

What's causing you to be afraid today? Ask the Holy Spirit for the courage to take the next step then take action. Once you've done this then repeat the process. This way we move in the strength of the Lord and overcome whatever is holding us back.

Prayer: Grant me the courage to take the next step.



Day 7

Take Action

'Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.'
Judges 5:7

Israel had been under severe oppression for about 20 years until Deborah arose and went into battle against their enemies with Barak. Deborah received a word from God concerning how deliverance would come to Israel and once she heard from God, Deborah 'arose' and went into battle based on the confidence she had in the giver of the instruction. There are situations we will face in life that can only be altered when we arise and take action.

'Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground.'" Exodus 14:15-16

'Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the Lord opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land.' Exodus 14:21

When the Israelites were in a different type of battle before the red sea, the Lord's position was clear – get moving! But He didn't leave it at that, Moses was given clear instructions on what to do for Israel to cross over. When it comes to instructions for battle there are always two parts – the God part and the human part. God always does His part by showing us what to do, we have to do ours by taking action and doing it.

'Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.' James 2:17

There are many things we may be believing God for and expecting Him to do for us, however He is expecting us to partner with Him to know the part we have to play. We can be confident that God will always do His part. If we want to know what God is saying so we know what to do, the Bible is the best place to start. As we search out what the Bible says concerning the situation and prayerfully take His word back to Him, the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truths on all matters of life will guide us on what to do. And when He does, we must take action as guided, trusting that the Holy Spirit will lead us along the best pathway. Are there instructions we have received that we feel we are unqualified or unable to follow? Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us, as we move in His strength not ours.

Prayer: Lord take me back to the instructions You have given me and help me as I take action on them. Guide me every step of the way as I put my trust in You.

Day 8

Conquering by Testimonies: Remembering Past Victories

“...There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD, The righteous acts for His villagers in Israel; Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.” Judges 5:11

When the issues of life rear their heads, it's easy to get overwhelmed and feel that the battle is beyond us or that all hope is lost. It's at this point that we should begin to recall all the things God has already done for us, how He brought us out of tough situations and resolved issues for us in the past. There's a faith that rises within us and a strength that comes when we remember that the God who helped us before is still with us and is more than capable to help us now and in the future.

“And they overcame and conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony...” Revelations 12:11a (AMP)

Before many battles, the warriors would recount their past victories and how the Lord helped them. this was a battle strategy to build up the faith of the soldiers, reminding them of who God is and what He had done in the past. Indeed, faith comes by hearing and when we recount what God has done in our lives and hear what He did in the lives of others, we are strengthened. If He did it before either for us or for others, He can certainly do it again. Arming ourselves with this knowledge will be a great source of strength to us in the future.

'...And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Matthew 28:20

There is power in journalling our testimonies of what God has done for us. One of the things it does is to give us encouragement and remind us of God's faithfulness, His might and His consistency. When we share with others who may be going through a similar challenge, they are also strengthened. Let us not take testimonies lightly, they are actually a powerful battle strategy.

Prayer: Lord I thank You for all You have done and are doing for me and all that concerns me.

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